

BUDDHIST HERESIES IN THE LIGHT OF ORTHODOXY

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Foreword

by His Eminence Metropolitan
of Sisanion and Siatista, Pavlos

Edited by

Monk Arsenios Vliagoftis
Dr. Theology - Ph.D. in Philosophy

Fr. Antonios Alevizopoulos (†)
Dr. Theology - Dr. Philosophy

END TIMES PUBLISHING,
2024

ISBN: 9798303151833
Imprint: Independently published

Translated from the original Greek:
Βουδδιστικές Αιρέσεις στο φως της Ορθοδοξίας,
Εκδόσεις: ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗ
First Edition, June 2007

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FOREWORD

BY HIS HONOURABLE METROPOLITAN OF SISSANI & SIATIS PAVLOS

The more time passes, the more we will appreciate the enormous work that the blessed Protopresbyter Fr. Antonios Alevizopoulos, small in stature but strong in endurance and persistent in effort, this blessed man of God accomplished in confronting heresies.

The blessed Elder, with particular diligence and responsible research, studied the entire scene of heresies and revealed the activities of the various parareligious and para-Christian groups and destructive cults, offering an enormous amount of material to which many refer today.

In some circles, even ecclesiastical circles, he was considered excessive, while from the parareligious sphere, he even received threats for his life. But he remained faithful to his ministry “unto death.”

For seven years, he was the soul of the Pan-Orthodox Conferences, and he managed to arouse the interest of all the Orthodox Churches, which for the first time provided responsible information about problems that they, too, were facing in their countries, especially those of the former socialist system. After their liberation, the parareligious sects, long since ready, fell like “grievous wolves” and like a contagious disease on unsuspecting believers.

He created pan-Orthodox collaborations, participated in pan-Orthodox conferences, and participated in efforts by

parents in the European area, all in order to shed ample light, with his responsible speech and documented research, on the dark paths of para-religion and occultism.

The subsequent years have completely justified him. The preoccupation with para-religion, the destructive cults and the consequences of their activities, especially for thousands of young people, proved to be not a “witch hunt,” as the local journalistic group of misinformation wanted and presented it, but a very serious existing problem - a scourge for many families, a problem with which the European Parliament itself was forced to deal with seriously and to take successive decisions, thus justifying the titanic struggle of Fr. Antoniou.

This struggle was not suspended even when his illness appeared. Fr. Anthony literally fell on the ramparts. I remember his insistence at a Pan-Orthodox Conference that a list of Parareligious Groups be drawn up.

When someone suggested that the compilation of the list be left for a later one, he left us speechless with his answer. "I won't be around then." He knew the seriousness of his health problems, but he put his work above and beyond his life. I will never forget my visit to the hospital shortly before his end. I went to see him, and he, forgetting his condition, gave me instructions for a conference that was to be held. "We held the conference after his death as a memorial service in his memory and as an assurance that his work would not stop, just as it did not stop.

This book is a text of its own, a weapon of battle in a difficult time when Buddhists were attempting to open a Buddhist centre at the entrance to Mount Athos. First in this battle was Fr. Antonios. The text published today was

his speech at that event. Today, it is being published under the editorship of the Most Venerable Monk Fr. Arsenios Vliagoftis, one of the main collaborators of the blessed Elder, who (Fr. Arsenios) was then the soul of organizing the struggle against the Buddhist centre and who continues today the good fight for the demarcation of the Orthodox faith and the exposure of the deceits of the para-religion, following in the footsteps of Fr. Antonios.

In this speech, Fr. Anthony, with knowledge and method, reveals all aspects and schools of Buddhism, points out the consequences of these teachings for man and his life, and explains the Orthodox teaching, the only one that saves man.

Reading the text, I felt like I was at one of the Conferences, listening to him, in his characteristic voice, develop his topic.

I would like to highlight what is written at the beginning of the conclusions of the conference of 27.04.1995 because it is still relevant today: "The newly emerged sects and new religious movements raise absolute demands in all areas of life, even in the realm of politics and economics, and constitute a threat to the personality of man, to our culture and to democratic institutions." As Fr. Antonios rightly emphasized, respect for religious freedom presupposes the light and knowledge of the truth; otherwise, people risk being trapped.

I would like to warmly congratulate Fr. Arsenios on the initiative of publishing this and wish that, remembering Fr. Antonios's great figure, we may all glorify God, Who gave him to His Church.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This small book has quite a long story behind it. It has already been eleven years since its author's death, and from this point of view, we want the present publication to be a kind of memorial and small thanksgiving for all that—many and important—the blessed Fr. Anthony offered in the crucial field of confronting contemporary heresies (or sects) that our Church had assigned to him.

The reason for writing the book was the illegal creation and operation in Halkidiki in 1995 of a Buddhist “Center for Three-Year Isolation,” that is, a Buddhist monastery. To address this challenge, the Holy Metropolis of Kassandra organized at that time (May 1995) a Conference related to Buddhist heresies and the main speaker was the blessed Fr. Antonios. From Fr. Antonios's involvement with this topic, the book emerged. However, he did not have time to publish it, as he left this life a year later (May 1996).

His presbytera, Antonia (who also passed away exactly one year later) and the three children of Fr. Antoniou gave us permission to proceed with the publication of the text. However, it needed editing because it had not taken its final form. This was precisely the role of the editor in the case of this book.

As for the term “Buddhist heresies,” which Fr. Antoniou uses, we should say that it is a tried term that is used both in the older and newer relevant bibliographies. We note this because there is a view that Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.) do not have heresies, as, for example, Christianity does.

The reader will perhaps notice a variation in the spelling of some words, some with a capital initial letter and some with a lowercase one. E.g. Karma and karma. We, as a rule, write the corresponding words with a lowercase one. The capitalization, whenever observed, is due to the transfer of a passage from some other book, where the capitalization is found.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Father Antonios's heirs, who entrusted me with the manuscripts of this book.

We also express our gratitude and deep respect to His Eminence Metropolitan of Sisani and Siatistis, Paul, who, in response to our request, undertook to preface the book. His Eminence, we should note, was—as an archimandrite at the time—one of the oldest and most devoted collaborators of Father Antonios in the serious and responsible ministry of the Orthodox witness for the pastoral confrontation of sects.

We believe that this book retains its value intact even today, as the various problems created by modern heresies are increasing daily, with adverse consequences for the entire society.

Monk Arsenios Vliagoftis

Easter 2007

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Among the various newly appeared sects, occult groups and new religious movements that have been spreading in the West in recent years are the various Buddhist sects. These groups have also been established in our country in recent years, using various guises.

The text that follows serves purely pastoral purposes and does not claim to be a complete or comprehensive study of the subject. We offer it only with the thought that there is an urgent need for a first filling of a large gap in the Orthodox pastoral-apologetic bibliography.

BUDDHIST HERESIES IN THE LIGHT OF ORTHODOXY

1. General Overview

The term Buddhism defines the doctrine attributed to Buddha by various schools and orders. Buddha (Enlightened) is a title of honour attributed to Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who probably lived from 563 to 488 BC.

a) Common Buddhist Doctrine

There is no teaching common to all. In Buddhism, there are many trends, schools, and sects. Today's movements were created based on the personality of one teacher, the raising of some points or the recruitment of others. But there are key points common to all Buddhist movements: All groups honour the historical Siddhartha Gautama as a Buddha, i.e. as “Awakened One” or “Enlightened One,” and they recognize his basic teaching on pain, which is summarised in “The Four Noble Truths:”

1. Birth, old age, illness, death, separation from loved ones and the non-satisfaction of desires are painful.

2. The cause of pain is bulimia, the thirst for life, which is due to ignorance, and the perception that the “ego” is perceived as something “objective,” as something “truly existing,” “in itself existing,” that is, as “independent of the factors or parts that constitute it, which leads to attachment, to consider oneself ‘as an autonomous and independent entity’”.¹

3. By removing this desire for life, the pain is removed. This will be achieved by man when he faces the “root,” the “cause of the defective conditions,” that is, “ignorance,”² that is, with the knowledge of the true nature. This will rid us of the “root cause” of dependent existence, known by the Sanskrit name “samsara,” that is, of “ignorance.”³

Commenting, we see, from the very beginning, that all life is evaluated negatively, and “the thirst for life” is rejected as the “root of evil.” Life and everything that happens around us does not correspond to the truth, have no actual existence, and have their cause in our ignorance.

Thus, the Buddhist moves in a spiritual and cultural space incompatible *with* our Christian and political principles. Man is not called to responsibility towards the world and his life has absolutely no meaning. The purpose of the Buddhist is to eradicate *from within himself* the thirst for life and this concept of life. Then, he will be led to “knowledge” and get rid of pain.

4. The fourth “noble truth” refers to the “path” of neutralizing the “thirst for life.” It is the “eightfold way:” right perception, right speech, right behaviour, right life, right effort, right thinking, and right meditation.⁴

According *to* the Buddhist conception, there is no deeper spiritual substance in man, the ātman (soul), as the Hindus would say. Buddhism preaches the anattā (non-soul). Man's ego (the self) is composed only of factors of this existence; nothing beyond that is transferred from existence to existence. The only thing “transferred” is the “blind” thirst for existence, directed by karma, which must be neutralized.

All groups believe in the doctrine of karma and reincarnation. Behind this doctrine is the view that man, with his good and bad deeds in this life, accumulates an essence called karma, positive or negative. To repay karma, according to a “Cosmic Law,” one must come back to life, even endless times.⁵

In the view of today's Dalai Lama, to stop pain (sickness, old age, death), we must stop giving birth. However, to achieve this, we must stop “the accumulation of negative or positive acts” (karma). This means that the attraction or longing for something will cease. This presupposes a stop of contact, and to do so, the name and form must be eliminated, “which will be done by stopping the conscience that stores the remnants of the acts.” This will happen “if the acts themselves, which lead to the storage of residues, are stopped.”⁶

The purpose of Buddhism is to liberate people from the cycle of reincarnation, from the wheel of saṃsāra. This occurs with “enlightenment” and the “Buddha nature.” The Buddhist aspires to nirvana, a state of non-existence or “blissful non-existence.” Nirvana is a state free from the individual existence associated with man's psychosynthesis.

To make a “positive and dexterous way of life,” the Buddhist believes that he finds “protection” in the “triple refuge”: the Three “Precious Gems,” as they call them. These are Buddha (the Exemplar), Dharma (the Teachings of Buddha) and Sangha (the community of practitioners).

Buddha is the teacher who shows the way, the “doctor who heals the sick.” Dharma is the “way” to enlightenment, the “medicine.” And Sangha (community) is “our helper in seeking enlightenment,” or “the nurse”.⁷ Refuge in the

Lama is added in Tibetan Buddhism. Thus, the “path” of Buddhism leads to a desperate dependence on the “Teacher” and the group's commune. All this is believed to help “expand the consciousness,” from which will come the seed of “enlightenment” for the realization of “Buddha Nature,” which exists in all beings.

In conclusion, the Buddhist “path” and its direction move entirely outside the Christian mindset and ethos. There is no element of responsibility towards the fellow man, nor the life of virtue as an opening to the love of God and fellow man.

Nothing in man has substance, and all the feelings of society and love, all his activities, are considered negative *classes*, which enhance the thirst for life. Man must be freed from all activity because it creates “accumulations” (karma), which push him to come back to life (reincarnation).

In the Buddhist conception, the only “reality” in *man's* life are those “accumulations” that push him into the next life. Without them, life does not exist. They only carry from life to life and push to a new birth. Man's purpose is a life that does not allow new “accumulations.” So, the ideal of the Buddhist is not action but inaction; it is not responsibility but rather non-participation in social life. This is the path of Buddhism.

b) “God”

According to Buddhist doctrine, the world has many levels, better and higher than the level of man. Everything is imprisoned in the wheel of birth and death (*saṃsāra*); even the “gods,” who are simply in the highest degree of

evolution, are not absolute or eternal and cannot help anyone. These perceptions led to the characterization of Buddhism as an atheistic religion.

It is, therefore, obvious that Buddhism, and especially Tibetan Buddhism, projects an image of God exactly opposite to the Christian one. In this spiritual space, “the existence of a God as the creator of the World” is not accepted, just as the “soul” of man “is not a self-contained entity. The spirit is a flow of consciousness that is constantly renewed and after death is reincarnated into other bodies.”⁸

Thus, Buddhism condemns man to infinite loneliness, which in the Christian conception is identified with hell.

2. Buddhist Schools

There are many orders, various schools and sects in Buddhism. The individual directions differ in how they lead to the “Buddha state.”

a) The Hīnayāna School (Lesser Vehicle)

This school is widespread in Kevlan, Burma and Thailand. It is also called Theravāda.

According to this, every human being must redeem himself alone, without outside help from God, gods or humans. What is needed is the right way. The Buddha followed this; that is why one must faithfully follow his doctrine.

The essential requirement is to avoid negative operations and not accumulate karma. The way to obtain

this is meditation. The three teachings of Hīnayāna are discipline, concentration (samādhi), and wisdom.⁹ For discipline, there are the teachings of Vinaya (rules of behaviour), which refer to avoiding all negative activity and reason. Samādhi is the perfect concentration in a single direction in the object of meditation.

The Dalai Lama speaks about “six aspects of consciousness.” Five respond to the corresponding sensations and do not help us to know the nature of the spirit. The sixth, “mental perception,” can achieve this. However, because it is in a state of fragmentation due to its employment with many objectives, it is necessary to concentrate on only one object. This mental concentration is called samādhi.¹⁰

Theoretically, everyone can realize the goal of enlightenment. However, it is assumed that only the monks achieve this. The ideal goal is Arhat (“one who is worthy,” holy, perfect).

From the above, we learn that man immerses himself in absolute loneliness. He doesn't believe in anything outside of himself; he doesn't hope for any help outside of himself. If he is called upon to avoid negative actions, he does not do so for the sake of his fellow man or to improve society. The self and “self-evolution” are always at the centre. Any positive actions are part of the technique and do not refer to one's neighbour but rather to himself.

However, any positive activity also results in “accumulations” and cultivates the “thirst for life,” even for a “better life.” Unless, of course, attachment does not constitute identification.¹¹ Any positive activity, therefore, does not imply cultivating a feeling of love and social

responsibility. They are simply helpful means for meditation, for self-immersion in the “Self.” Thus, any “good works” are devoid of moral value.

b) The Mahāyāna School

This school is widespread in China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam. This school projects the ideals of the Bodhisattva (*Bodhi* = illumination, *Sattwa* = complete being), i.e. beings who seek the perfection of Buddha for the good of other beings. The Bodhisattvas have already reached “enlightenment,” but they choose not to enter nirvana and come to earth to help people free themselves from the painful cycle of rebirths. The Bodhisattvas are regarded as earthly incarnations of an immutable, transcendent and eternal Primordial Buddha. After their death, they become deities after they have prepared their images and developed a ritual so that people can honour them and ask for their help.

Mahāyāna declares that this level is accessible to all because “all beings have in them the power of Buddhist nature.”¹² But in the end, only a few do it: the monks, who have entirely eliminated the ego’s influence.

Another key point in the doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism is the teaching on “emptiness” emanating from the Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna (2nd century AD), who founded the Mādhyamaka School (teaching of “middle way” or “centrism”).

According to the doctrine of “emptiness” (Sanskrit: *Śūnyatā*), everything is dependent without its own existence. They depend on something else and are recognized only in contrast, e.g. movement cannot be

known without immobility, action without inertia. Even the nirvana becomes conceivable in contrast *to* the cyclical course of life, samsara. Based on the principle of “emptiness,” there is no longer any difference between subject and object, salvation and non-salvation, male and female, samsara and nirvana, Buddha and worldly man, and so on. “Emptiness” is the only immutable principle, the primary source of all values. Whoever experienced this emptiness arrived at “enlightenment” to the “state of Buddha.”

The “first nature” is “emptiness,” the lack of “self-existence of spiritual existence.” One must unravel the concept of a “non-existent entity.” When one realizes “emptiness,” one reaches liberation.

In the context of this teaching about “emptiness,” everything is counted as projections of the inner content of the “ego,” which in the final analysis is an illusion, i.e. it has no existence of its own.

A prolific publication of the “Centre for Tibetan Studies and Meditation,” distributed at a lecture in Athens (29.7.1979) entitled *Tibetan Buddhism*, states: “Mahāyāna ... it projects the ideals of man, who seeks to become a perfect Buddha for the good of other beings. This level is accessible to everyone because, according to Mahāyāna, all beings have in them the Buddhist nature. However, only he, who has got rid of his ego’s influence and only acts motivated by altruistic motives, can realize the perfect Buddhist state. The ultimate truth in Mahāyāna is that in the final analysis, both beings and phenomena are governed by emptiness, i.e. they have no independent and unalterable existence of their own. The state of this truth leads the individual to transcend the duality of subject and object and

thus frees him from the bondage of delusion and selfish tendencies, which keep him in misery and make him unable to act freely and fearlessly for the good of others.”

In conclusion, we observe that this School leads to dependence on the “Teacher,” who is considered “enlightened” and who came to lead the believers to the “path.” An example is Guru Rajneesh (Osho), a tantric Buddhist-Hindu sect in which followers suffer every kind of humiliation of their personality.

The altruistic conception mentioned here also contains the element of opposition since everything exists in relation to the opposite. Thus, the bad is counted as the other side of the same thing, i.e. the good. There is no difference between salvation and non-salvation!

c) The Vajrayāna School

This school is widespread in Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet, Bhutan, and Ladakh. It is a branch of Mahāyāna that contains mixed Hindu-tantric elements. It is also called (incorrectly) Lamaism.

The basic doctrine of this school, which existed in northeastern India during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., is that “enlightenment” is not achieved after endless reincarnations but in this life. Indeed, some texts mention 7 days to 7 years!

As stated in the *Handbook of Religious Communities*, published on behalf of the Evangelical Church of Germany, representatives of the new (Mahāyāna) direction believe that every appearance in the world—every thought, every word, and every situation—is connected through secret

threads with the primordial Principle and magically influences each other.

“To quickly reach the goal of enlightenment and redemption, i.e. unity with the archetypal Principle of all existence, with emptiness, one must use certain magical practices, meditation techniques, and magic forms. At the same time, a more progressive role is played by ritual sex. Over time, a third form of Buddhism, Vajrayāna, was developed in this background. After 700 A.D., it spread throughout North India, reaching Tibet and Nepal in this form.”¹³

Vajrayāna Buddhism was spread in Tibet by the first Tibetan king, Songtsen Gambo (620-649 AD) and his two Buddhist wives, princesses of Bengali and China.

As mentioned in the same handbook (p. 753), during the 8th century, King Trisong Detsen (754-797 AD) called on the great Indian intellectual Śāntirakṣita to spread Buddhism intensively in Tibet. According to a myth, as soon as Śāntirakṣita began his work, he was expelled by the demons of Tibet. For this reason, Master Padmasambhava, the greatest tantric sorcerer from India, was called, who—according to the myth—managed to defeat the demons and make them protectors of the Buddhist faith in Tibet. Thus, Padmasambhava managed to overcome these contradictions and bridge Vajrayana Buddhism with the archetypal religion of Tibet (Bön), fusing them into one kind of faith in spirits and demons, shamanistic rituals and ceremonies. In 780 A.D., Padmasambhava founded the first Samye monastery with Tibetan monks southeast of Lasa, who took the name Lama (from the Tibetan *bla-ma* = abbot, superior).

In the 9th century, a tradition of Masters began with the Indian mystic and philosopher Atiśa. In this era, schools, traditions, and heresies were created. Three of them have remained relevant to this day: Nyingma, i.e. “The Old Order,” Sakya (from the homonymous monastery) and Kagyu.

Atiśa’s disciple, Dromtön (1005-1064 AD), founded the community of Kadam, which was transformed into an order centred on the monastery of Sakya, founded in 1070 AD. This monastery, which later gave its name to the Buddhist sect Sakya, became the bastion for the sovereign aspirations of the Lamas.

The Mongol nobleman Kublai Khan gave the power of Tibet to the abbots of the Monastery of Sakya, who are considered incarnations of Bodhisattva Manjusri. In this way, religious and political power were united into one person.

Another opposing movement was created during the 14th century as a reaction to the extremist tantric practices of the “Red Hat School” (Nyingma). It was the “heresy of the virtuous” Gelug, created by Je Tsongkhapa (1357-1419 AD). Its members followed strict rules, avoided magical rituals, and because of their attire, they were called the “Yellow Hat School.” From this movement came a new religious order headed by the Dalai Lama (“Ocean Teacher”), a supreme secular authority. The Panchen Lama (“Great Scholar”) represents spiritual authority.

The Lamas are considered incarnations of the Buddha and are “Bodhisattva,” i.e. they have the ability, among others, to consciously incarnate after their death to help humanity. Today’s Dalai Lama is the 14th in a row and is

considered the embodiment of Bodhisattva Chenrezig, who is considered “an archetypal or divine aspect that gathers all the mercy of Buddha. This mercy is believed to have prompted the Dalai Lama to be born again in Tibet and to take the form of the religious and political leader of the country.”¹⁴

In 1959, when the Chinese occupied Tibet, the Dalai Lama fled to India. Today, the “Yellow Hat Sect” is the most widespread of the four schools of Tibetan-Lamaist orders: Nyingma School (the Ancient School), Sakya School (the Scholastic School), Gelug School (Yellow Hat / Tradition of Virtue School) and Kagyu School (the School of Oral Tradition).

Zen Buddhism (Japan) and Zen meditation, with its various schools, also belong to the Buddhist camp.

We open a small parenthesis here to say that, after the historical evidence examined above, the myth put forward by some collapses, that supposedly our Lord Jesus Christ went to Tibet and was trained there in the techniques of yoga!

The history mentioned above proves that during the time of Christ, Buddhism didn't exist in Tibet, only demon worship, i.e. the Bön religion. The first Buddhist monasteries were organized centuries after the coming of Christ! That is why Dalai Lama, in an interview in Athens in 1979, taking a stand against these myths, said:

“But that's funny! In my country, there was such ignorance; what could he have learned from us? Christ came to us only through his missionaries in the first centuries. And your monasticism (i.e. Christian

monasticism) ... He arrived in Tibet before we organized monastically and thoroughly in all our successive reforms. I think he exercised his influence.”¹⁵ Therefore, Buddhism hasn’t affected our Orthodox ascetic tradition, but the opposite happened!

d) Tantric Buddhism

The Hindu and Buddhist literary esoteric texts name tantras for recitation and meditation and various ritual acts.

Tantric Buddhists see these practices as a third way, next to Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna, to experience unity with the Absolute or “emptiness.”

Finally, the tantric denies the objects of everyday life that exist as contradictions (male-female), which have an apparent existence and can—as it believes—have the experience of their unity in meditation, especially the unity of man and woman. That is why there are “4 energy centres in the body of man” (chakras) in the area of the eye, the heart, the larynx and the top of the skull. These centres are connected by the two energy conductors of the masculine (right) and the feminine (left) generative force.

Through meditation, the tantric tries to use these powers to drive them downwards so that they unite in the area of the genitals. Then, he lets them go up to a “third channel,” believing he will attain enlightenment with this method. The basic theory is that man can be pulled upwards by the same procedures that pulled him down, so poison is used to deal with the poison.

These tantrics do not distance themselves from worldly things but use them as instruments and intermediate

stations. They claim that “unity” can be achieved better by the union of the meditator with a “sanctified partner” of the other sex than by simple meditation. In addition to “right-hand tantrism,” in which sexuality is used as a meditation, there is also the harsh tantrism of the “left hand.” To this tantrism belongs the movement of the guru Rajneesh-Osho, who became world-famous for his cohabitation of sexual orgies in Poona, India.

Tantrics also use magical-mystical practices, which include careful body care, breathing and concentration exercises, the use of meditative syllables (mantras) that are considered carriers of energy, magic phrases, ritual formations of the hands and fingers (Mudras), and meditation with the use of images (Mandalas). These practices aim to awaken physical and mental energies and strengthen the intuitive power during meditation.

With the help of images (Mandalas), tantric practitioners imagine gods, spirits, saints, and Buddhas, which are formed in their inner vision and are then allowed to pass away again.

A guru is essential for tantric techniques. “If one is not under the guidance of an experienced teacher, there is a great risk of failure and of suffering a nervous breakdown,” warns the Dalai Lama.¹⁶

These dangers, which threaten the health and mental balance of mainly young victims, must force the State to intervene. Also, many psycho-cults of Buddhist origin are active in the field of “therapy” with associates who are completely unqualified in medical matters and put the health of unsuspecting citizens at great risk.

3. The Kargyudpa (Kagyü) School of Tibetan Buddhism

Tibetan Buddhism appeared in the West in the form of various schools and sects. The most widespread of these is Kargyudpa (Kagyü).

The term Kargyudpa means “a branch of the lineage.” It comes from the Tibetan term *Bka' brgyud pa*, which means “line of transmission of the four authorized ones.” It is especially about meditative methods and yoga techniques, which were transmitted in principle in four lineages. These techniques were received in the system of the Indian Yogi Tilopa (988-1069 AD). Kagyü maintains most of Tilopa's positions. Nāropa—a disciple of Tilopa, who was revered as a saint before his death—formulated the “six dharmas.” The main founder of Kagyü is Naropa's disciple, Marpa Lotsāwa (1012-1096 AD), who also attained “enlightenment.”

In Kagyü, there are four different schools - sects: Karmapa (Tulku lineage), Dikungpa, Talungpa and Dukpa. In the West, the Karma-Kagyü branch of the Karmapa school is particularly widespread. That is why we will refer to it more in the following.

a) Historical overview

This movement's spiritual guides are the so-called Karmapas (Teachers-Lama), who are considered incarnations of Buddhas.

The first Karmapa Lama is Düsüm Khyenpa (1110-1193 AD) from eastern Tibet. At the age of 50, he reached “enlightenment,” and when he was practising “dream yoga (milam),” he experienced identification with “non-duality” and saw in a vision the female deities (ḍākinīs) who offered him a black crown (vajra) woven from their hair.

The movement says this crown hovers invisibly above the heads of all its successors as a sign of the realization of the true reality of all beings behind appearances, which is “emptiness.” But this invisible crown is seen only by those initiated into the “Diamond Path.”

Düsüm went with the “dream yoga” to Thailand. There, the Tantra Master Vajraganda showed him the kingdom of the future Buddha Maitreya, and he received initiation from Maitreya himself. Thus, he was proclaimed to be the Karmapa, that is, the man of the Buddha's activity, of whom the Buddha speaks. "He founded the Tsurphu monastery, which until 1959 was the seat of all his successors (Karmapa).

In 1406 AD, the Chinese Yongle Emperor summoned the fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa, and during a ceremony, he saw the “black crown” above the Karmapa’s head. Out of gratitude, he made an effigy adorned with precious stones and presented it to the Karmapa. Since then, the “black crown” ceremony has been introduced into the movement, during which the Karmapa, as part of a special ritual, displays the “black crown” to the people. It is believed that in this way, the “spiritual energy” of all the Karmapas is transmitted. The ceremony, called Vajra Mukut (“The Ceremony of the Black Crown”), is to this

day the Karmapa's main opportunity for communication with his followers.

The couple Hannah and Ole Nydahl—authorized to spread Buddhism in our country and throughout the Western world—state that “the leader of our school today is the Gyalwa Karmapa,”¹⁷ who is called by the Tibetans “Precious Gem.”

And they continue: “His first body came into the world in 1110 and is of great importance to us because with it he attained Perfect Enlightenment. With the name Dūsum Khyenpa, “the knower of the past, present and future,” he became the 7th link in the series of transmission of the extremely powerful and effective means to Enlightenment which is called in Tibetan ‘Kargyupa,’ that is, oral teachings.

“From Dorje Chang, the very beginning of Enlightenment, these teachings passed through two Indian yogis, Tilopa and Nāropa, to Marpa, who brought them to Tibet and translated them. He then transmitted the teachings to the great yogi Milarepa, who in turn taught them to Gampopa, the teacher of the first Karmapa.”

“After attaining Perfect Enlightenment, the Karmapa, the first of the ‘Holy Lamas’ of Tibet, chose to come among us in this world of dependent existence again and again until all beings are freed from ignorance and the suffering that stems from it. Today, he is coming for the 16th time. Before his death, he gives full details of his family, the place and the time of his next birth, facilitating the Lamas who are responsible for finding him. Their task is simplified even further when, at the age of three days, the new Karmapa repeats very clearly the Sacred Mantra ‘Om

mani padme hum’ and gives incredibly powerful blessings.”

“His example was followed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many other Lamas out of boundless compassion for all beings.

“We believe that everyone should share the same resolve and obligation, not to be satisfied with their own personal salvation but to be born again and again until they help all beings reach Enlightenment.”

The 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje (1923-1981), after the occupation of Tibet by China (1959), fled to Bhutan and eventually moved his seat to Sikkim, to the Rumtek monastery near Gangtok. He did not fail to travel to Europe and America in order to seek out his followers and establish centres. He died in Chicago of a heart attack. The movement is now led by Mipham Chokyi Lodro (1952-2014), the 12th incarnation of the Shamarpa (red crown) branch and representative of the Kagyü school of Nepal. The movement does not yet have any “sign” for the appearance of the 17th Karmapa.¹⁹

The movement spread to the West mainly through the presence of Tibetan refugees. Along with the Buddhist leadership (Dalai Lama, Karmapa), many refugees left the country (1959). In the 1960s, Kagyü Centers had already been formed in Scotland and the USA. In 1970, a second wave of refugees strengthened the movement's presence in the West. Buddhist Societies and Centers for Tibetan Studies became the bodies of the movement.

A key factor in the spread of the movement in the West was Kalu Rinpoche, who was “recognized by the 16th

Gyalwa Karmapa as a projection of Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé (1813–1899).”

In the “Introduction” of the book *Dharma. Precious Gems from the Teachings of Lama Kalu Rinpoche*, it is stated that “Since 1971, His Holiness had travelled four times to Europe and North America establishing Dharma centres and facilities where Westerners could practice the traditional three-year retreat. In 1983, in Sonanda, he gave the great cycle of empowerments, called the Five Great Treasures, which includes teachings and empowerments that had been gathered by His Excellency Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé. The recipients of these teachings were the four great spiritual sons of His Holiness the 16th Karmapa, who has already departed from his body, as well as thousands of Tulkus, Lamas, monks, nuns and laypeople.”²⁰

The movement's missionary in Europe is the Dane, Ole Nydahl²¹ and his wife Hannah.

As Nydahl himself states in the Preface to Lama Kalu Rinpoche's book, in 1970 and 1971, he visited Kalu Rinpoche's monastery in the eastern Himalayas with his wife and a small group of Europeans and North Americans, who were initiated into Buddhism by him.²²

In an interview with an esoteric magazine in Athens, Ole Nydahl stated that “Buddhism in Asia is close to its death. On the other side, in the West, the opposite is happening. Amazing growth.”²³

b) Operators of the movement in Greece

Operators of the movement in Greece are the following:

- “Center for Tibetan Studies and Meditation Karma Drub Giu Chô Khor Ling,” 156 Sonierou Street, Athens.

- The above Center founded the Center “Karma Berchen Ling. International Association for the Protection of the Environment of Greece” in mountainous Corinth (1200 m. altitude). As we read, It is dedicated to the 17th Karmapa, who is today (1996) 14 years old and has not yet been officially recognized. As reported in a publication, the Center is taught by senior Lamas, who come to Greece for this purpose and prepare “future inmates of Buddhist monasteries in the Himalayas.”

This Center, in the form of an Association, was created in 1991 by 200 followers (most of them foreigners), among them the Nydal couple.

- “Institute for Mahayana Studies”, Tritonos 81, Paleo Faliro.

- This organization was founded in Halkidiki, the Center for Three-Year Isolation “Karma Rik Drol Ling. Center for Practical Philosophy and Psychology,” headed by Hara Kalomiri, director of the National Conservatory, with the Buddhist name Karma Tseuan Tsoetso.

- “Athena Karma Vajradhara Ling and Oracle ‘Sangwa Rikma,’” Desvoli 17, Athens.

This centre of the Karma-Kagyü branch of Tibetan Buddhism was created “with the aim of giving the widest possible audience the opportunity to communicate the grace of Entities of the highest ray of light, wisdom and love for all beings.”²⁴

The Teacher of this “Academy,” Sangwa Rikma, is also considered to be such an “Entity,” who “with Her

transcendent teachings, oracles, astrosophy, protection, healings and Her energy radiation of excellent vibrations, leads Her disciples on a quick and safe path to enlightenment, through the Diamond Way, the Vajrayāna.”²⁵

According to the same text, the establishment and name of the “Academy” is due to the “blessing” of “His Holiness, Kalu Rinpoche through the venerable Bokar Rinpoche and Lama Khempo Denye.”²⁶

In addition to these bodies, there are also:

- “Gon Po Tsak Duk Ling” (Gelungpa Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism), Athens.
- “Hellenic Buddhist Society”, Petaloudas 2, Ekali.
- “Asian Studies Society” (Oriental Studies Society).
- “Center for Tibetan Philosophy and Meditation,” Ioulianou 18, Athens.
- Kaaruna Center in Lesvos.
- Soka Gakkai
- Kuzana Doroz
- Nyigmapa Center.
- Dzogchen Community
- “Do Nag Zung Tsung Ling” (Paros).”²⁷

It is striking that the Greek name of the above organizations does not correspond to the Tibetan one. In Greek, neutral terms are used, such as, for example, Association for Tibetan Studies, Protection of the Environment, etc. On the contrary, the Tibetan terms, which are, of course, completely incomprehensible to non-specialists, determine the true identity of these organizations. In particular, the term *Ling*, which means Monastery. Also, the term *Drol*, which means liberation,

determines the basic purpose of Buddhism, which is liberation from samsara, from the cycle of rebirths.

The Danish Lama Ole Nydal brought the movement to Greece with the help of a “Greek from London.” In 1975, he came to our country at Hara Kalomiri's invitation and formed a small circle.

In 1976, the “Hellenic Buddhist Society” was founded in Athens, with Nikos Dimou as president, who stated that the society aimed to protect the public from the distortions of Buddhist philosophy by various gurus. Furthermore, the “Center for Tibetan Studies and Meditation” invited the Dalai Lama to Athens in 1979, who gave a lecture in Parnassos Hall on the topic of “Universality of Man.”

Ole Nydahl began seminars in Athens in 1981, and his movement expanded into Thessaloniki and Patras (1982). Visits by top Tibetan Buddhist officials and lectures in official halls, including the Doxiadis School, followed.

In the late 1980s, our country was chosen to establish international Buddhist Three-Year Isolation Centers, that is, Buddhist monasteries. A Greek occult magazine claims that the choice was made in areas that, according to the occultists, are “energy centres”: mountainous Corinth and Holomontas in Chalkidiki, opposite Mount Athos (The Holy Mountain).

But the way these Centers appear and act to the outside world is completely misleading.

c) Buddhist monastery in mountainous Corinth

At Nydahl's suggestion, in 1988, a plot of land was purchased outside Derveni, 60 km. west of Corinth, in the Montenegro region (altitude 1200 meters) and the Karma Berchen Ling centre was founded. Tenga Rinpoche is responsible for ritual matters of the center. "His Excellency, Gyaltsab Rinpoche" visited the centre in 1989 and "blessed the land, bringing real power to the region".

The construction of a temple and building complexes for the installation of Buddhist monks is planned.

The mountain Ling, which means monastic centre, designates this as a Buddhist centre. The term Karma identifies the Kagyü tradition.

However, the true Buddhist monastic identity of the Center is systematically concealed. The official body appears to be the "International Association for the Protection of the Environment of Greece." The purpose of the association is, according to the statute, "to develop by any means the love of the members of the association, regardless of gender, for the protection of the environment and to disseminate in Greece and abroad the idea of protecting Greek forests from fires, reforesting burned forests, increasing natural greenery, as well as protecting Greek coasts from pollution."

Also, the purpose of the Association is "the development of the spirit of brotherhood among its members and the cultivation of every culture, which contributes to peace among people. The objectives of the association are pursued through the organization of recreational and cultural events, camps, seminars, publications of cultural nature, etc."

Here, we observe that every religious element is systematically avoided, including the term Buddhism.

The association's members are mainly foreigners but also Greeks. Among the members is the Dane Ole Nydahl, of course, not in the capacity of Lama but in the capacity of “Professor” and his wife Hannah Nydahl, in the capacity of “translator”!

“Before your arrival, please prepare yourself by chanting at least five thousand Dorje Sempa hundred-syllable mantras with meditations. Also chant at least one hundred thousand **Om ami dewa hrih** mantras with meditations. The more you do, the better.”

These instructions are contained in a special English booklet given to “pilgrims” from the West in 1990. The booklet is labelled “**Phowa**”²⁸ with Ole Nydahl (August 1-10, 1990, Corinth Greece—Karma Berchen Ling).

d) In Halkidiki

The second Buddhist monastery, in Holomontas, Halkidiki, belongs to the same branch of Kagyü and was built by the Urban Society “Karma Ri Ling - Center for Practical Philosophy and Psychology”²⁹ and a planning permit for “holiday homes” (!)

The lack of correspondence between the Tibetan and Greek titles is striking here. The Tibetan title is clear and states that it is a monastic centre (Ling) of the Kagyu branch and not a “Center for Practical Philosophy and Psychology” in the sense that the terms are understood by any unsuspecting citizen.

According to the Statute (Article 4), the purpose of the association is “the cultivation, exercise and dissemination³⁰ of practical philosophical and psychological methods through which the spiritual and moral advancement of the individual is achieved, his better adaptation to the social and natural environment, the preservation and improvement of the health of the body and the development of his natural spiritual and physical abilities. These methods are drawn mainly from the great practical and theoretical tradition, which was formed under the influence of Eastern and especially Buddhist cultural and philosophical currents.”

Also of interest is the following article of the statutes, which refers to the methods of achieving the purpose: “The above purpose is pursued and achieved by any lawful means through the exercise of economic (non-commercial or profit-making) activities. The main methods of achieving this purpose are:

- a. the organization of educational and training events
- b. the provision of the means and the monitoring of group or individual practice in the principles and methods taught under the supervision of specialized teachers.
Specifically mentioned here is the provision of food and shelter to those interested in the consolidation of the above principles and methods,
- c. the engagement in rural life to produce products suitable for natural and healthy nutrition as a prerequisite for a good mental state,
- d. the publication of books and publications related to the above purpose,
- e. the cooperation with other natural or legal persons pursuing the same or similar purpose and

f. the performance of charitable and public benefit projects.

This statute, dated April 27, 1989, does not define the true identity of the \$5 group and contains a substantial contradiction:

On the one hand, it is claimed that it aims at the adaptation of the individual “to the social environment” and the development of his “spiritual” potential, but on the other hand, it is emphasized that the “methods” are drawn particularly from the area of Buddhism, which naturally hinders the adaptation of the individual to the specific social environment of Halkidiki and the development of spiritual potential, in accordance with the spiritual and cultural perceptions that dominate the region.

Thus, the dissemination of “practical, philosophical and psychological methods,” which aim at the “promotion of the individual,” essentially constitutes a contamination of the specific spiritual and cultural environment.³¹

However, articles 6 and 10 were added to the amended Statute dated October 25, 1990. Although they were listed in the previous statute, their content was absent (!). These two articles reveal what is happening in Holomontas, Halkidiki. We quote them here because they are interesting.

“Article 6. Three-Year Studies Branch

“Within the framework of the Society's purpose and its implementation methods, a special branch is established within it to provide the means for interested parties to follow the three-year traditional philosophy studies of the Tibetan branch of Kagyü under the supervision of the

professor of philosophy, Gendun Rinpoche, or the persons he will indicate.

“This branch will operate in Taxiarchis, Halkidiki, where the Society's privately owned property is located.

“The present annexe will also be housed in the basement for the construction of a building on the above property. To cover any expenses required for the operation of this annexe, a separate bank account will be opened with a special mention ‘for the three-year studies annexe,’ which will be used only for these purposes.”

“Article 10. Administration of the Branch

“With the exception of the above article 9 of this present, the branch of the Company referred to and established in article 6 hereof shall be managed and directed by the partners,... [names are mentioned] who shall manage the above special account and shall take any action to fulfil its special purpose, as well as the purpose of the branch, and shall represent the Company towards any third party, each alone without the need for the countersignature of the other. Revocation of these administrators, change of the purpose of the annexe or the above account may take place by decision and agreement of 2/3 of the total number of the other partners, but only after the concurring opinion of Professor Gendun Rinpoche or the person he will indicate, or which must be given in writing,

“The administrators of the company, in accordance with article 9 of this statute, shall control the management of the administrators of the annexe, and in the event of a disagreement between them regarding the manner of exercising the authority of the latter, they shall request the

arbitration resolution of the dispute by Gendun Rinpoche or a person he will indicate in writing.

“The branch managers are required to cooperate with the company managers in preparing the company's annual report and budget.”

Commenting, we note that this is not about meeting the spiritual needs of a Buddhist community, or one that does not exist in the above areas, but about a dishonest invasion of the Greek Orthodox spiritual and cultural space with the aim of alienating it.

The experience of recent years demonstrates that the various Buddhist sects do not necessarily constitute religious communities of good faith. The example of the Buddhist sect of Shoko Asahara (Aum Shinrikyo = 'religion of Aum Supreme Truth') is typical. The fact that the Dalai Lama himself had expressed himself positively about this sect did not prevent the horrific events in the Tokyo Metro, with 10 dead and 5,000 injured in March 1995, from happening.

We cannot say that the Buddhist groups operating in Greece are identified with the horrible sect of Asahara, but equally, we cannot give any certificate of social contribution just because this is mentioned in their statutes. It is up to the competent state authorities to investigate the content of these groups' faith and to what extent this is destructive for individuals and society as a whole.

Of course, this cannot be done solely on the basis of the statute, nor are we obliged to wait to see it in practice. Here, we have two characteristic examples of Buddhist sects in Corinth and Halkidiki, which have deceived and

continue to deceive the Greek State and the inhabitants of the regions.

There is information that these people extend their activity to populated areas, conduct fundraisers and even exert influence on school students.

e) Teaching

In order to understand the extent to which these movements contribute to adaptation to the social environment, it is necessary to examine their teaching and practices.

The basic teaching of the Kagyü movement, as well as of Tibetan Buddhism in general, is the “four noble truths.” However, it is declared that Hinayana and Mahayana do not lead quickly to the goal. They are merely steps. In order to quickly reach “enlightenment,” one must follow a faster path, the tantric, the “Diamond Path” called Mahāmudrā (literally “great seal”). This is the “path of liberation.”

The movement emphasizes three points: theory, meditation, and practice. The theory states that man's true nature is the nature of Buddha, the “emptiness” (of which we speak more extensively in other parts of this book), which is unborn and immortal. However, because man is bound to the cycle of existence, this true nature is tarnished and cannot be distinguished in its natural purity. Therefore, man must follow the “path of liberation” (Mahāmudrā).

“The absolute truth,” writes Ole Nydahl, “is the fact that everything is in reality empty, a dream, and every being a Buddha and everything is perfect.”³² The departure from this truth creates suffering because it creates disturbances

and confusion. But these disturbances exist only on a relative level. On the absolute level, everything is identical: “Everything is perfect, everything is wisdom... sickness, old age, death and every kind of pain and suffering are just as bright and wonderful as youth and love and strength because at that point there is no more attachment and one is simply a form returning into the space from which it came and the other is a form emerging from space... and both are radiant play of the boundless powers of the spirit... Only as long as we are attached, as to the body, do we think ‘Oh, no,’ then it is painful.”³³

In the state of “wisdom,” we understand the true nature of the spirit and all things “meet and unite, and the spirit understands its own nature beyond time and space, containing everything. but without being limited by anything, and this is the perfect wisdom of the Buddha.”³⁴

f) Karma-reincarnation

According to the worldview of movement, all beings evolve through the system of successive births at different levels of existence. Only in man “do we have enough misery to touch liberation and at the same time, under certain conditions, have the possibility of escaping from the endless cycle of successive births, which is the cause of so much misery.”³⁵

The concept of karma has a fundamental place here. “Everything within or without our supposed selves is the result of a previous action... everything we do, say or think is like seeds that ripen from life to life.”³⁶

“Good or bad Karma lies at the root of the existence of a good wife, a troublesome neighbour or loving parents. It is

the fruit of previous words, thoughts and actions ripening. And our reactions to these events, in turn, will bring in this or in subsequent lives, when all the conditions are met, good or bad experiences.

“As our actions are governed by ignorance, they are usually confused, and therefore, we can hardly discern the operation of the law [of karma]... The Buddha, who knows everything, and the highest Lamas, who have also dispelled the last veils of ignorance from their minds, can see even in the smallest detail cause and effect, millions of years into the future and the past.”³⁷

Kalu Rinpoche, in the same book mentions the following characteristic “incident”:

“The Buddha saw in a previous life a mother suckling a child and eating fish, throwing the fish bones very abruptly at a poor dog that had crawled to her door. The scene seemed very sad to him because he could see that in his previous life, the child had been her worst enemy and that he would harm her sometime in the future, while the fish was her mother and the dog her father.”³⁸

g) The Lama and “Protection”

As we read, in the West, Kalu Rinpoche gave the “vows of Protection,” the Chenrezig meditation, initiation and instructions for the exercises. During the “Rite of Protection,” Kalu Rinpoche gave “Protection names,” starting with the word “Karma,” which indicates that the initiates “had a beneficial karmic connection with the Three Precious Books and had passed into the protection of the Karma Kagyü lineage.”³⁹

As we read in another book: “In Tibet, initiations were given after the end of this preliminary exercise, but today many Lamas, like Kalu Rinpoche and others, initiate into meditations, in which we can practice in parallel with it.

“These initiations and the transmission of power were given by the Noble Buddha, Shakyamuni Gotama, in Bodh Gayā and have reached us through the Lamas. The latter are the means who skillfully uproot illusions, as well as all suffering. During the initiation, the Lama gives us a Sacred Form, a Yidam (iṣṭadevatā), on which we meditate. There are many such aspects, and this is because we have many different combinations of spiritual poisons, and thus, each one is given the most suitable aspect of the Buddha and the Lama for his purification. The Sacred Form has no spiritual poisons. When we become one with Her, ours dissolve. The body becomes one with Her, and poisons no longer find a place within us. Speech is transformed into ‘Holy Sound’ and our spirit into Wisdom.

“From the moment we become one with the Sacred Forms, we can use the particularly powerful and secret methods of meditation that will bring us quickly and surely to the All-Encompassing Enlightenment, to perfect Wisdom, to the state where all is perfect, and nothing needs to change.”⁴⁰

The disciple gives the Samaya, which binds the initiates to their Lama and to each other as Vajra brothers and sisters. All are bound to strict silence regarding the initiation process and their spiritual progress.

The training is done by initiation into tantric techniques. This can only be done by a Lama-Guru, who embodies the practice of Kagyü. The Lama is an “ocean of blessings.”

With the help of his form, the disciple can gain the experience of his own true self. These are incarnations of spirits who come to help seekers and take on their karma, which they burn and eliminate, thus removing the obstacles to “enlightenment.” ⁴¹

In the book *Dharma. Precious Gems*, it is emphasized that “the teachings given by the Buddhas are not intellectual experimentation but are based on their personal experience of perfect Enlightenment. Having set aside all that concerns 'I' and 'I was' and having resolved to act for the good of all beings, Buddhas constantly experience perfect Enlightenment. These enlightened beings manifest in skilful ways, with the aim of liberating other beings, and they use appropriate forms or projections.

“Thus, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are born in all forms. Sometimes, they come as kings and queens, princes, and ministers. Sometimes, as ordinary people, peasants, animals, whatever is most practical to benefit beings and teach the Dharma. Sometimes, they appear as men. Other times as women.”⁴²

According to Kalu Rinpoche, “The lineage of the Lamas is the unbroken Tradition, which transmits to us directly through the Holy Dharma, the secret teachings, the ones necessary to attain Enlightenment in this life.

“High in the sky stands Dorje Chang, the very principle of Enlightenment, the essence of the spirit of all Buddhas. He is blue in colour and holds in his heart the symbols of the Skillful Means and the Liberating Wisdom. On his left, as we see him, is Tilopa; on his right is Nāropā; in the centre is Marpa, who brought the teachings to Tibet. To

Marpa's left is the great Milarepa, and to his right is Gampopa.

“Lower in the centre is His Holiness, the Gyalwa⁴³ Karmapa, the first Tibetan⁴⁴ who chose to reincarnate at will for the good of all beings. He is now with us in his 16th conscious reincarnation. Each time he leaves a body, he gives detailed instructions regarding his coming incarnation, and when he comes back to the world, he perfectly retains the Memory of his previous existences.

“He also recognizes the reincarnated Lamas of other schools.”⁴⁵

“Buddha Opame is the Buddha of the Infinite Light. From Opame’s teachings to help all beings, a ‘Buddhist field’ was created, the purified spiritual realm of Dewachen, where those who have a spiritual bond with him directly or through his initiation given by the Lama are born after this life, and where, passing through ten successive stages, we reach Perfect Enlightenment. The beings who pass through these ten stages appear as Tulku, reincarnations who work for the good of all.”⁴⁶

It should be noted here that the perception that there is a connection and correspondence between the birth and the meaning of the life of Jesus Christ and the Buddha, as well as other “Saviours” of humanity, has been cultivated by Buddhists in recent times.⁴⁷

At another point in Kalu Rinpoche's teachings, it is added that “the Lama also appears as an aspect of the Buddha who helps us on our way. We call this ‘Aspect’ the Protector, and by believing in it, we are protected from the

dangers of body and spirit, and we receive all the help we need for ourselves and all those to whom we pray.

“We pray for the highest goal, Liberation, for the good of all beings and for the happiness of all.

“The Lamas also give us their spiritual grace, into which they have channelled great power and virtue. Their blessings plant the seed of our subsequent practice and help us immensely when we are already on the path. Seeing images and statues of Holy Forms and hearing Holy Words, we receive this grace with all our senses, for example, when we taste blessed foods and, finally, when the Lama himself touches us. In this way, the Lama himself transmits his grace to us with his own hand, and we feel as if the sun is warming us. It is something very powerful.”⁴⁸

Kalu Rinpoche notes that devotion to the Lama is characteristic of the *Vajrayāna* and is not found in the *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna*. It is true that praying to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and taking Protection provides an effective way to attain Enlightenment, but it is a slower way than that of the *Vajrayāna*, where a close relationship with the Lama is created. The *Vajrayāna* contains the teachings and the method that can lead one to the experience of perfect Enlightenment in this life. The Lama is the one who, through the renunciation of ego and absolute trust, transports the disciple to his own enlightened essence.

“For the disciples, the Lama is an enlightened being who is a living example of wisdom and harmony. He is someone who, having walked the Path that the disciples are now following, has the ability to guide them through his infinite wisdom. He knows the degree of evolution and the

karmic predispositions of each disciple and transmits the teachings to him in the most appropriate and effective way. At advanced levels of discipleship, disciples can identify with their Lama and activate within themselves his inconceivable, for the relevant level, qualities.

“The fact that devotion to the *Lama* is a decisive factor in the development and progress of each student becomes more understandable if we consider why, as a spiritual guide, the Lama gives us the opportunity to know the two levels of the word ‘Lama.’ The first level is expressed by the Lama himself since he will reveal to us the hidden meanings of the teachings and will wisely guide us towards Enlightenment. He is the one who will lead us to the second level of the word, which is our own self, the inner Lama, our pure nature, the inherent wisdom which, when activated, dissolves the veils of confusion. “Although the inner voice of wisdom is always within us, only the Lama can make us hear it.” ⁴⁹

The Lama-Guru transmits mystical power through various rituals and familiarizes the disciple with the tantric teachings. The basic energy is the so-called “fourth energy transmission,” during which the disciple’s consciousness is coordinated with the consciousness of the Lama-Guru.

The Lama’s energy is believed to be in his cut hair, in his breath, and in his clothes. That is why his followers wear small amulets (Gawu) around their necks with the Lama’s hair and other “blessed” objects and “healing Balls.”

During the various initiations, the disciple bows three times to the Lama and kneels down to pray: “I beg you, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, do not

forget me! Teachers, I beg you, do not forget me! I, whose name is..., from this moment until my enlightenment I take refuge in the Lama, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha.”⁵⁰

With this vow, the disciple binds himself to the three “precious gems”: the Buddha, the dharma (the teaching), and the sangha (the community). All three dissolve in the Lama into unity: The spirit of the Lama becomes for the disciple, the awakened Buddha, his words constitute the dharma, and his external form the sangha.

After initiation, the disciple sees the Lama as free from every kind of error or weakness. He also believes that he is free, like the enlightened spirit, like the Buddha.⁵¹

h) Meditation

The act of meditation begins with working on the body in order to generate energies or to change physical energies into spiritual ones. It must “open” to other beings, in order to feel unity and neutralize the pain that duality creates. Thoughts must be positive; likewise, actions will be “spontaneously correct” if there is a feeling of unity. Not on the basis of a “wisdom” that comes from outside or with the help of a spirit or god, but on the basis of the very nature of man, which is “clarity.” “wisdom,” “enlightenment,” that dissolves confusion.⁵²

An important form of meditation for Buddhists is the so-called Mahāmudrā. According to Kalu Rinpoche, “An important stage in the practice of Mahāmudrā is the meditation on the Lama, which manifests itself as a union of all blessings and inspiration. We visualize the teacher in the sky, in front of us or on the top of our heads. We pray

concentratedly to receive his blessings; we meditate and absorb his essence within us. Then, we let the spirit remain in its natural state. At this point, we have already entered into Mahāmudrā meditation.”⁵³

The student is called upon to make 100,000 prostrations (!) to the Lama-Guru or his image, perform breathing exercises, practice yoga of physical postures (asanas), perform many rituals, and use mantras, which are considered secret spells armed with energy.

Of fundamental importance are the mandala exercises, that is, the “insight” of the deities and spirits (yidam or iṣṭadevatā) and identification with them so that they become a second Teacher and protector. A Lama—they believe—can communicate directly with these deities through meditation, while others can only achieve this through the mediation of the Lama.

“All the deities of meditation (yidam) are projections of enlightenment and there is none that does not provide blessing and the power to help and benefit beings. In particular, however, the form of Chenrezig is the embodiment and union of Love and Mercy of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and all enlightened beings. Meditation on Chenrezig helps ascetics through absorption to realize Emptiness.”⁵⁴

In the book *Dharma. Precious Gems*, it is stated that the Kalu Rinpoche taught the faithful in the West in order to develop Mahāmudrā, “five exercises, the mantra of each of which is repeated one hundred and ten thousand times, and ten thousand times for mistakes.”⁵⁵

We also read in the same book that after the appropriate physical and mental preparation, the disciple begins training in the “six yogas” of Nāropā, called the “Path of Means.”⁵⁶ The goal is the experience of “emptiness” and, at the same time, the Buddha nature, which will radiate into everyday life through the practice of “wisdom” and compassion, which is characterized as Maha Ati. This is energy without predetermined rules, without intention, without a plan, a kind of mechanical functioning of man.

The “Six Yogas [or Dharmas]” of Nāropā are:

a) Yoga of psychic heat (magic fire; Tibetan *tummo*). The tantric Buddhist attempts to unite the active (masculine) with the static, passive (feminine) wisdom or principle, with the aim of experiencing emptiness. This is sought through complete control and restraint of the genital fluids and the avoidance of ejaculation. with the aim of transforming sexual energy into spiritual energy.

b) Yoga of the illusory body. It is considered a psychological exercise. By analyzing everyday thoughts, the student, as if through a mirror, sees images of his own body and transfers to it virtual shapes, negative and positive ideas, perceptions, and fantasies in order to free himself from his identification with them. Then he begins to meditate on his own yidam (divinity) and to become one with it, with the aim of transforming his “worldly life” and thought into the spiritual world of the Buddha and ultimately leaving in him only the experience of emptiness as the only reality.

c) Yoga of the dream state. With this technique, the meditator seeks to keep consciousness awake, even in sleep, so that he can simultaneously know the illusory form

of the dream and the waking state. His purpose is to be able to consciously influence the phases of the dream, both in wakefulness and in sleep, and to perform miracles. In this way, he achieves "liberation" from the limitations of everyday life.

d) Yoga of the radiant light. According to the Tantric understanding, every person after death is confronted with the “bright light of emptiness.” The brightness is so great that the consciousness, which is separated from the body, is frightened and returns again to the cycle of rebirth. With the technique of the yoga of the radiant light, the yogi trains himself during his life with the light of the “consciousness of the Buddha” so that after his death, he can face it fearlessly.

e) Yoga of the intermediate state (Bardo). This is the “nowhere” between death and rebirth. The yogi practices to position himself “intuitively” in relation to his karma, to understand its extent its effects, with the aim of using this “knowledge” to abolish karma. Thus, in the state of Bardo, he will be free from it.

f) Yoga of the transfer of consciousness (Phowa). This technique aims to enable the yogi, after his death, to direct his consciousness to an incarnation of his own choice or to the kingdom of eternal light, which is the great goal of every yogi.

4. Zen

This is a Buddhist school. In Chinese, it is called Chán and in Sanskrit, Doan, which is said to correspond to the Greek *dianoia* (διάνοια; from *dia-*, “across, through” + *nóos* “nous, mind”).

Zen was brought to China in 520 AD by the Indian monk Bodhidharma (470-543 AD), who is considered the patriarch of Zen. From China, it was brought to Japan in the 12th century AD.

Bodhidharma defined Zen as a “special Gospel outside the Gospel, beyond words or lines, which aims directly at the souls of people, at their true selves and at the path to the Buddhahood.”⁵⁷

Consequently, one cannot detach the types—used here—from the purpose, which is “the knowledge of the nature of the self and enlightenment.”⁵⁸ George Kampasakalis, in the introduction to the book *Zen Wisdom*, emphasizes that “the Truth that Zen expresses, the transcendent spirit of life, or if you like, the spirit of transcendental life, since it is beyond space and time and simultaneously within all types and times, can be searched for and found anywhere and everywhere. if one is ordained.” Thus, according to this Concept, one can “reach the truth of Zen” within one's own space,⁵⁹ for example, within Orthodoxy!

Thus, the “truth of Zen” is absolutized, and the differences between the various religions are relativized. “When the transcendental reality exists, you are already perfect and you abandon the teachings that brought you here, just as a cripple abandons his crutches once he is healed,” adds Kampasakalis, identifying “Zen” with the transcendental reality and continues: “Since the essence of Zen... is this transcendental reality (elsewhere called “God”), whatever is said about it will be completely arbitrary elements of it and never it itself in its entirety.”⁶⁰

5. Critical View

Concluding our investigation of Buddhist sects, we conclude by noting that the spiritual space in which they operate is incompatible with the Christian faith. Kagyü is perceived as the only path to salvation. Regarding other religions, it is stated: “I am not convinced that other religions have a path and a goal like this.”⁶¹

That the Christian faith does not aim at the same “goal” is obvious. The movement emphasizes: “When there is still some feeling that there is an ‘I,’ then the feeling of ‘you’ will arise. And when there is an ‘I’ and a ‘you,’ attachment to what we want and aversion or hostility to what we do not want will arise.”⁶²

The Christian, however, seeks precisely the opposite: interpersonal relationships, which presuppose the existence of the “I” and its opposite, the “you.” What the Christian desires is “attachment,” that is, unity with God the Father within the framework of the relationship created by adoption, and not the “dissolution” or “confusion” of persons and “emptiness.”

In a widely printed publication of the “Center for Tibetan Studies and Meditation” entitled *Tibetan Enlightenment*, Christ is considered an “enlightened teacher” alongside others, such as the Buddha, who taught the same truth, which helps us to pull back the veils of ignorance before the sun that we have within us.

The movement's perception of God and man is completely different from the perception that Christianity

has, where the ideal is not the experience of “emptiness” but the loving interpersonal relationship.

Buddhism is a system of self-salvation. Man is called to seek God within himself, to deify himself. This identification of essence between God and man or even the identification between God and the world is incompatible with the belief in a God, Creator and Saviour of man and the world.

The worship of Tibetan Buddhism is pure idolatry, the worship of demons in the ancient religion of Tibet, which has been merged with new elements. In his home, each follower sets up a private altar with images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Lamas and offers them worship. Every morning and every evening, he prostrates before them, meditates, and studies the Buddhist scriptures. Special rituals are performed on the night of the full moon and on the day of the “enlightenment” of Bodhisattvas, Lamas, etc. All this is incompatible with the Christian faith.

Outwardly it seems that the movement practices love and stands in favour of peace, but these terms have a completely different meaning in Buddhism. Every expression of lively interest, every substantial personal relationship and every conscious participation in social responsibility constitutes “attachment” for the movement and is rejected. Everything essentially refers to the individual and his development, to the search for “emptiness.” Even love and peace are not “goals” but are included in “mechanical” teachings and techniques of the movement, directed towards the experience of “emptiness.”

The *Handbook of Religious Communities* by the German Lutheran Church states the following characteristically about the techniques of the Movement:

“The harsh spiritual and mental techniques of Tibetan Buddhism were created and developed in an area with extreme climatic and geographical conditions. They correspond basically to the personality structure and mental state of the inhabitants of Tibet and Central and East Asia. With the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the West and the simultaneous uncritical reception of its practices by young Europeans and Americans, significant dangers for the body, soul and spirit may arise.

“Experience has shown that only a few Western interested parties have dealt with the religio-logical-historical and religio-physiological foundations of this form of Buddhism. The majority of them were probably deceived by the power of suggestion of the itinerant Lamas and the exotic character of the formality of the rituals in the individual Buddhist centres.

“Young European and American followers of Kagyu must ask themselves whether the worship of deified people and the belief in spirits and demons represented in their sect really help them to mature, to become personalities with critical ability and a sense of responsibility. The same question arises from a Christian point of view regarding magical rituals and practical superstitions.

“Some cases have become known in which young followers of the Lamas in the Federal Republic of Germany when they fell ill, did not take the medicine recommended by the doctor, but the ‘healing’ balls blessed by the Lama. The risk that harsh meditation techniques can cause mental

illnesses (e.g. psychosis and paranoia) should also not be underestimated”⁶³

Joachim Keden, an expert on sects for the Protestant Church in the Rhineland, states in his report that the movement leads to various conflicts because it also teaches occult magical rituals and profound personal changes are expected due to the strict isolation of the meditators in the “Three-Year Isolation Centers.” “For 3 years, 3 months and 3 days, they have not seen their loved ones. This is a real psychological uprooting,” the German expert notes, and continues:

“In other cases, negative effects have appeared in a similar social space (relationships with parents, siblings, profession, etc.) that are very similar to the effects of well-known sects and psycho-cults.

“For these reasons, a warning must be given regarding the consequences of joining this Lamaist sect.”⁶⁴

After all these elements, it becomes clear that the State should have intervened and enforced the observance of the laws that provide for the process of rebuilding houses of worship and monasteries. The Buddhists in mountainous Corinth and Chalkidiki deceived the competent Authorities both as to the true purposes of the aforementioned bodies and as to the identity and purposes of the rebuilt buildings (holiday homes)!

The State must also assess whether it has the right to allow the contamination of the spiritual and cultural environment in these areas, even contrary to the opinion of their inhabitants. The Resolution of the Holy Community of Mount Athos on this issue is characteristic.⁶⁵

The negative consequences that the operation of these Buddhist monasteries will have on Greek youth and, more generally, on our country should also be assessed so that in the whole matter, it can be judged whether there are reasons of national interest here that require the taking of measures similar to those that have been taken in corresponding cases in other countries for the protection of their cultural environment. And in any case, if nothing else, at least strict adherence to Greek legislation, which must apply to everyone, should be required!

APPENDIX A

BUDDHIST TEXTS

“Approaches to the Path”

Under this title, in the already-used book *Dharma. Precious Gems from the Teachings of Lama Kalu Rinpoche*, we also read the following:

“There are various approaches to the Path. For example, we see the various levels of ordination, starting from the vows of protection, the vows of a layman, a new monk or nun, a fully ordained monk or nun, the vows of the Bodhisattva and so on.

“Another approach to the Path is the practice of the ngöndro: the one hundred and ten thousand recitations of the Prayer of Protection, accompanied by the performance of prostrations,¹ the one hundred and ten thousand recitations of the Vajrasattva mantra (of purification), the one hundred and ten thousand Mandala offerings² and the recitation of the one hundred and ten thousand prayers in the meditation of Guru Yoga.

“Both approaches—the levels of ordination and the gradations of the practice of the ngöndro—belong to what

we call the Path of Accumulation because this first phase of the complete Path to Enlightenment is the accumulation of what we need for the journey. However, practice, which aims only at the purification of wrong views and the development of virtue, is unstable because its benefits can be lost. The practice of meditation provides the stabilizing factor which creates a benefit that will not be lost but will continue to be a stable element of our path. In particular, the *practice of Shi-ne* is important because whatever virtue we accumulate, whatever positive dispositions we strengthen, all acquire a greater degree of stability when the mind is in a calm state. Furthermore, whatever type of meditation we try to develop acquires a solid foundation with this initial phase of *Shi-ne* meditation. Therefore, when this stabilizing element has been created, we speak of a higher level of the Path of Accumulation.

“There are various ways of analyzing the Complete Path. For example, we can refer to the Five Paths that constitute its various levels: the Path of Accumulation, the Path of Application, the Path of ‘Seeing,’ the Path of Meditation and the Path of ‘No More Learning’ or Buddhahood. At a more extensive and detailed level, we have the Thirty-Seven Elements that contribute to Perfect Enlightenment. All of these are different ways of analyzing the same phenomenon and present different approaches to Enlightenment.

“Among the Thirty-Seven Elements that contribute to Enlightenment are the four essential memories, the four right attitudes regarding what one should accept and what one should renounce, the four bases for the development of supernatural powers, the five qualities, and the five powers that develop during one's practice of the Dharma.

“All these elements belong to the first two Paths: that of Accumulation and that of Application. They do not include the first level of Bodhisattva Realization which corresponds to the Path of Seeing, the third of the Five Paths. In our present state, when we speak of the emptiness of mind, that it is pure and unobstructed, we are expressing only a mental concept. But as our practice of the Dharma progresses and develops, there comes a time when there comes a direct experience of the mind as empty, clear and unobstructed.

“When this direct experience is stable, we refer to it as the first level of Bodhisattva realization. In Tibetan, this is called *raptu gawa*, which means “complete joy.”

“In the first level of the Bodhisattva, there is freedom from the limitations of attachment to the self. That is why we can speak of the hundred projections that the Bodhisattva of the first level can realize in a moment or the ability to remember a hundred previous lives or to foresee a hundred future ones. These abilities correspond to a partial and not complete freedom of the spirit from the limitations of ignorance, and that is why we refer to the twelve aspects of this freedom as the Twelve Hundred. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva of the first level has passed beyond the karmic process and is no longer completely subject to the limiting obstacles of Karma.

“At the tenth level of the Bodhisattva, fundamental ignorance, the last level of obscuration, is eliminated, and the mind has almost no limitation. A tremendous capacity for expressing the positive qualities of the mind is then developed. At this point we are not talking about a hundred or a thousand projections, but about a hundred thousand million projections, past lives, future lives, and so on! The insight of the Bodhisattva of the tenth level is unlimited.

“The Ten Immaterial Levels of Bodhisattva Realization constitute the third and fourth Paths, the Path of ‘Seeing’ and the Path of Meditation. Within these, there are other levels—the lower, middle and upper levels of the Path of ‘Seeing’ and the lower, middle and upper levels of the Path of Meditation—but as a whole, they coincide with the ten levels of realization. Among the Thirty-Seven Elements conducive to Enlightenment, the seven Branches of Enlightenment—awakening, investigation of dharma (phenomena), mindfulness, joy, purification, samadhi, and equanimity—and the Noble Eightfold Path are experienced at these levels.

“The tenth level of Bodhisattva realization, the final step towards perfect Enlightenment, is achieved by a special state of meditation known as Vajra-like samadhi, where Vajra means the invincible, that which penetrates all and is penetrated by all. Here are encountered the last and subtlest traces of ignorance concerning the absolute nature of reality. “When this extremely subtle veil becomes transparent and disappears into emptiness by Vajra-like samadhi, then we are perfectly enlightened. “We have reached full and perfect Buddhahood, which is sometimes called the eleventh level of Bodhisattva.”³

APPENDIX B

**ANNOUNCEMENT
OF THE EXTRAORDINARY DOUBLE HOLY
CONGRESS
OF THE HOLY COMMUNITY OF THE HOLY
MOUNT ATHOS
ON THE BUDDHIST CENTER IN HALKIDIKI***

The Holy Community of Mount Athos was informed with indescribable sadness of the establishment of a Buddhist monastic center in the Taxiarchis region of the Prefecture of Chalkidiki, and indeed, in an area that previously constituted a Metochion of Mount Athos. We believe that this was done intentionally in order to contrast an anti-Christian monasticism with that of Mount Athos.

Holomontas was a major Christian center in the past with Monasteries, Athonite Metochions and hermitages, where Saints Euthymius the Younger, Basil of Thessaloniki and Symeon lived and became saints. It is a continuation of Athonite monasticism. The existence of a non-religious monastic center at the gates of Mount Athos constitutes a provocation and an insult to our Greek Orthodox tradition, as it continues to be experienced on Mount Athos, the other monastic communities and the parishes of the region. We point out that the center in question operates illegally because its members:

a) They concealed their true goals from the beginning, appearing as ecologists, psychologists and nature lovers. To the public services of Halkidiki, they presented themselves as a Center for Practical Philosophy and Psychology, while it is a mixed monastery of Mahāyāna Buddhism in three-year isolation.

b) They misled the urban planning authorities with the vague title of a holiday center and secured a permit illegally, while subsequently they changed the use of the buildings to a religious institution.

c) They kept their intentions secret to build the center in question unhindered and without legal procedures, given that it does not serve the religious needs of the residents and does not have an open and visible worship space.

We inform the Greek people that members of Buddhist centers deify and worship specific people such as leaders of their sects, worship the Buddha or other idols, invoke Indian deities, that is, demons, in their various ceremonies, and also resort to magic.

Their ultimate religious goal is the abolition of the human person. Redemption and salvation for them is the disappearance and dissolution of human freedom and personality in the impersonal universal being. In this way, they suck out the mind, reason, judgment, conscience and freedom of their subjects, making them willless beings and obedient instruments of their leaders and their conspiring plans. Members of such religious groups carry out terrorist and anti-social actions, as recently happened in the murders in Switzerland and in the cold-blooded killing of many people with chemical gases at a Tokyo train station.

Any action to prohibit the operation of such parareligious centers does not affect their religious freedom because they:

a) Their goal is proselytism, and therefore, the defence of the Church in favour of the religious freedom of its members is required.

b) Not having a successor in Halkidiki, they will try to create one, as their statute provides. For this very reason, the European Parliament proposed and ratified the resolution “on new religious movements” in 1984 to control and limit them. Unfortunately, Greece has not yet taken an official position on this controversial issue.

c) Not having an overt and open worship, like the well-known religions, they create implications of occult or even orgiastic rituals, as Tantric Buddhism advocates.

Foreign religions of all types claim the souls of Orthodox Greeks, as if we Greeks do not have Faith or as if our Faith is incomplete or unacceptable.

With pain of soul, we realize that there are modern Greeks who, out of ignorance, prejudice or misinformation, resort to Eastern mysticisms in order to find salvation and redemption, ignoring that in our Orthodox Church, the only true Church of the God-Man Christ, there is the possibility for the human soul to find what it is deeply seeking: the Truth, the peace of the soul, the victory over sin, passions and death.

If the people of the East, ignoring the radiant face of the God-man Christ, they resort to the loveless and expressionless face of the Buddha, what forces the

Orthodox Greeks to abandon the faith of their Fathers, the gurgling and inexhaustible water of Orthodoxy, and to seek to quench their thirst from the murky and poisonous waters of the various foreign Eastern mysticisms?

Is there not in our Orthodox Church healthy mysticism, mental and heartfelt prayer, the long tradition of the asceticism of our holy Fathers, genuine asceticism, and long experience of community life?

Is it possible that in this place so many monastic centers did not flourish, such as the Holy Mountain and Meteora? Are there not so many holy people here, clergy, monks, and laity, who, having struggled well, achieved theosis by grace?

Are there not today anonymous and eponymous God-bearing people, spiritual fathers and elders who comfort and guide multitudes of believers and help them overcome the impasse, anxiety, and insecurity of contemporary man with the grace of the Triune God?

The replacement of the God-man Christ by the Buddha is equivalent to spiritual suicide! The Buddha brings about the dissolution and disintegration of the human person. Jesus Christ leads to its revelation, valorization and deification.

Nor is it possible for Christ and the Buddha to coexist, as many followers of Eastern religions deceive and spread in order to deceive.

There are not many truths nor many saviours. For there is only one incarnate God and one conqueror of death, and therefore one Lord Jesus Christ.

We call all Greeks to spiritual vigilance before we mourn new victims, such as the Satanists of Attica.

We call on those who have been misled by the para-religions in Greece, those who are not paid agents of the various gurus, instead of bringing the darkness of the Far East to our Orthodox Greece, to know the Light of our Orthodox Faith and to transmit it to peoples “sitting in the land and shadow of death.”

All those in the Extraordinary Double Holy Synod
Representatives and Heads of the twenty
Holy and Philanthropic Monasteries of the Holy Mountain
Athos.

* The Announcement is dated 3/16.5.1995

CONFERENCE OF 27.4.1995
on the topic: “Newly Appeared Totalitarian Heresies
in the Light of Orthodoxy.”

CONCLUSIONS

“The newly emerged sects and new religious movements make absolute demands on all areas of life, even in the realm of politics and economics, and constitute a threat to the human personality, to our culture and to democratic institutions. Their philosophy is fascist, and their inverse morality is expressed mainly in the way they treat the apologetics of our Church and those who criticize it.”

This is a clear conclusion of the conference held under the chairmanship of His Holiness Metropolitan of Kassandra, Mr. Synesios, at the Spiritual Center “Panagia the Philanthropist” in Vatopaidi, Halkidiki.

The conference made special reference to the organization of the Korean pseudo-messiah Sun Myung Moon, which is trying to erode the spiritual and political leadership of Orthodox countries, to the “Church of Scientology” (in Greece, K.E.F.E.) and to the branch of “U-MAN HELLAS, Productivity Consultants,” which mainly succeeds in the erosion of economic units and businesses, in Buddhist sects “International Association for the Protection of the Environment of Greece” and “KARMA RIK DROL LING - Center for Practical Philosophy and Psychology,” in the organizations “New Acropolis,” “Panhellenic Center for Gnostic Studies,” “Brahma

Kumaris,” “Sahaja Yoga,” “Greek Rumi Committee” by Taki Alexiou, who, as president of the “Panhellenic Historical and Philosophical Society” takes the lead in defaming the apologetic work of our Church in Ministries, Local Government, Church bodies and the Mass Media, as well as in defaming key contributors to this pastoral work, such as Fr. Antonios Alevizopoulos, delegate of the Church of Greece and coordinator of this pastoral work at the pan-Orthodox level and Fr. Arsenios Vliagoftis, delegate of the Holy Metropolis of Kassandria.

The totalitarian newly appeared sects do not recognize human rights in those they criticize, as they “obstruct” the prevalence of the “only saving recipe” and are therefore considered “Criminals of Humanity.” To be neutralized by any means is the main goal of the reverse moral virus of Scientology and other related groups.

“Your opinion... I don't care... opinions are the antithesis of knowledge... food for Egoism, that is, for Satan,” declares the teacher of the Greek Rumi Committee, Takis Alexiou, who demands “surrender” to the teacher, “like the body of a dead person in the hands of the one who will prepare it for burial.” “The Dishonest have no rights,” declares the Mediator of Scientology, which boasts that our country is the first in terms of the rate of increase of followers.

“Surrender to Lord Sai... oh guru. Incarnation of the Holy Trinity...” pray the Greek followers of this guru.

“Democracy reigns only over peoples who are in a subhuman state,” proclaims Anandamurti, messiah of Ananda Marga,” while his colleague of Scientology says: “Democracy has pushed man further into the mire.”

In Buddhist sects, the teacher Lama is considered the Incarnation of the Buddha; the only one responsible for

showing the way to the followers, and he becomes an Object of worship, which leads to a distant orientation and dependence of the followers. A typical example is the recent tragedy of Japan, where the completely dependent branches of the Buddhist sect Aum Shinrikyo of Shoko Asahara went so far as to mass murder their fellow human beings by releasing poisonous gases into subway stations, following the organization's basic doctrine that the transition to the "New Age" is achieved through reincarnation after a total annihilation.

The conference denounced that Buddhist sects and other newly emerged parareligious groups are buying up land in the best areas of the country, even on the Aegean islands, to a very alarming extent, in order to establish their pan-European or global headquarters there or to operate as "alternative holiday centers."

According to the unanimous opinion of the participants, the Holy Mountain is a spiritual treasure and a source of pride for all Orthodox peoples, without exception. Therefore, the construction and operation of the Buddhist monastic center in the region and the threat of contamination of the spiritual environment concern all Orthodox nations and the Orthodox diaspora. The Greek Government must take this factor into account, and the Holy Community of the Holy Mountain has the right to address the Orthodox everywhere, as well as international organizations, and to request their intervention to prevent this abomination.

In conclusion, it was underlined that the newly emerged sects and new religious movements operate in a spiritual and cultural space contrary to the principles, morals and culture of our country and constitute a source of

contamination of the spiritual and cultural environment, a real threat directed against the institutions. This is perhaps not possible to realize today unless the State takes the appropriate measures to protect basic values constitutionally guaranteed, on which Our entire spiritual, social and national existence is being founded. In a few years, the new reality that will take shape will necessarily awaken us. Then we will realize that it will be too late to anticipate developments, and we will be limited, if we do so, of course, to healing the wounds that we have opened.

For the seminar
The Metropolitan of Kassandria
Synesios

NOTES

1. Dalai Lama, *Man and Religion*, ed. Center for Tibetan Studies and Meditation, Athens 1980, p. 35.
2. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
3. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
4. *Dharma. Precious Gems from the teachings of Lama Kalu Rinpoche*, ed. Vapsia-Krassa, Athens 1993, p. 63.
5. For a detailed presentation of this subject, see Fr. Antonios Alevizopoulos, *Reincarnation or Anastasis*, Ed. I. Mitr. Nikopoleos, Presv. 1992.
6. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
7. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
8. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, pp. 10 and 43.
9. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
10. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
11. See. below in the pp. 76-78
12. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. VIII
13. *Handbuch. Religiöse Gemeinschaften*, ed. Horst Reller, Manfred Kiessig und Helmut Tschoerner. Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1993, pp. 752-753.
14. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. XI.
15. See. A. Panoti, "A Meeting with the Dalai Lama," periodical, *Ecclesiastical Truth*, 68-69/1979.
16. Dalai Lama, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
17. Editor's note: The word's specific stress is found on the suffix in the text. In other translations—and there are most of them—the stress is found in the prefix (Karmapa). We have adopted the form Karmapa because it is found in the older translations of Tibetan texts into Greek and also because Fr. Anthony uses it in his manuscripts.
18. See OLE NYDAHL, *Buddhism*. Athens 1981, pp. XI-XIII.
19. Editor's note: These were written by Fr. Antonios Aledizopoulos in 1996. The current situation (2007) is that

this movement has recognized as its spiritual leader (17th Karmapa) a young Tibetan, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, currently 25 years old. Since 1999, he has been touring the movement's centers around the world; thus, he came to Greece for the first time in August 2005, giving initiations.

20. *Dharma...*, 1st ed., pp. 25-26.

21. Editor's note: The ending is emphasized as Nydal in some Greek editions of his books (such as the *Diamond Road*), while in others, it is Nydahl.

22. *Teachings on the nature of the spirit*, 2nd ed. "Center for Tibetan Studies and Meditation, Karma Drub Gyu Cho Khor Ling." Athens 1983, p. XV.

23. Magazine, *Third Eye*, 8/1991, p. 21.

24. *Dharma...*, 1st ed., p. 99.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

27. Note: The current situation (2007) is as follows: The Karma Berchen Ling movement, led by Ole Nydahl, has been operating a Buddhist retreat house in Athens since 2005 with a license from the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The Karma Gyaltsen Ling movement, Vizoukidou 41, has achieved the same in 40 churches in Thessaloniki since 2006. The Buddhist center in Holomontas, Halkidiki, under the title "Karma Rik Drol Ling," is now used by the aforementioned movement in Thessaloniki. At this point, a serious issue arises for the Greek judiciary, which, after the first instance and appeal conviction of the Buddhists for illegally operating a retreat house in Holomontas, acquitted them after their appeal to the Areopagus "for lack of evidence". The court accepted the Buddhists' view that the Three-Year Isolation Center there was a holiday home!

Also, a relatively new movement (from about 1998 onwards) is that of the former "grand master" of Greek Freemasonry Efstathios Liakopoulos, who founded his own

movement in Athens with the title "King Menander Center for Buddhist Studies" and became a Lama himself. The movement belongs to the school of the "old" (Nyimtiara) of Thidetian Buddhism. The "Vajrayana Karma Che Kor Ling Buddhist Meditation Center", Rubesi 70, Neos Kosmos, in 'Althina, has also received a license to operate a meditation center

28. Editor's note: this is the Buddhist meditation technique of "transference of consciousness," one of the most advanced and dangerous techniques of Tibetan Buddhism.

29. Editor's note: Subsequently, the Tibetan title from Karma Ri Ling became Karma Ril Drol Ling with a change in the statute, and the Greek subtitle was retained.

30. The emphasis is the author's.

31. See ANASTASIOS MARINOU, Dr. N. Vice-President of the Council of the Territory, "Buddhism at the Gates of Mount Athos (Issues of Constitutional and Administrative Law)," Athens 1997.

32. OLE NYDAHL, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

35. *Teachings...*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

39. *Dharma....* *op. cit.*, p. 31. Note. vol. ed.: Buddhist texts sometimes have the Kargyu type and sometimes the Kagyu type. We consider the Kargyu type to be more correct

40. *Teachings....* 9th above, pp. 58-59.

41. OLE NYDAHL, 9th above, pp. 14-16.

42. *Dharma....* 9th above, p. 151.

43. Note to the ed.: The Gyalwa type is found elsewhere.

44. Note to the ed. We maintain the spelling of the text we quote. However, between the terms tibetikos, tibetanos,

tibetanikos and tibetanos, all of which are used in the relevant bibliography and philology, we prefer the latter.

45. *Teachings...*, op. cit., pp. XII-XIII.

46. *Ibid.*, p. XIII.

47. See. Marc Semenoff, *Collection: To get to know the thought of the Buddha*, translated by Vangelis Katsanis, Athens 1976, p. 41.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

49. *Dharma...*, op. cit., pp. 187-188.

50. *Handbuch...*, op. cit., p. 763.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 763-764.

52. OLE NYDAHL, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9.

53. *Dharma...* op. cit., p. 186.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

56. A description of the “six yogas” is found in the *Handbuch. Religiöse Gemeinschaften*, pp. 765-766. The content of these pages is summarized below.

57. *Zeniki Sophia*, Edited by S. Kampasakalis, Athens 1987, p. 5

58. *Zen Buddhism. Type and Essence*. Collection and translation Evangelos Grammenos, Athens 1977, p. 27.

59. *Zeniki Sophia*, 1st ed., p. 7.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

61. OLE NYDAHL, 1st ed., p. 18.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

63. *Handbuch...*, op. cit., pp. 771-772.

64. *Lytothi*, p. 772.

65. Listed in Appendix B.

APPENDIX 1 NOTES

1. Editor's note: The “prostrations” resemble in form the so-called great or layered metanoia of the Orthodox Church. Of course, the meaning is different.

2. Editor's note: Other translators emphasize the word in the ending: Mandala.
3. *Dharma*.... Op. cit., pp. 66-71.